

Exhibit 1

Declaration of Garrett Ripa

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES, INC., and
CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY,

Plaintiffs,

v.

KRISTI NOEM, in her official capacity as
Secretary of the UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY;
TODD LYONS, in his official capacity as Acting
Director of the UNITED STATES
IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS
ENFORCEMENT; KEVIN GUTHRIE, in his
official capacity as Executive Director of the
Florida Division of Emergency Management,
and MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, a political
subdivision of the State of Florida

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 1:25-cv-22896

DECLARATION OF GARRETT RIPA

Pursuant to the authority of 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Garrett Ripa, declare that, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the following is true and correct:

1. I am the Field Office Director (FOD) for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Miami field office (ERO Miami). I have been the FOD of ERO Miami since September of 2022.

2. As the FOD, I am responsible for managing ERO Miami, encompassing a total of 652 authorized positions, 16 sub-offices, and four detention facilities. ERO Miami's area of responsibility (AOR) covers enforcement operations throughout the State of Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the Migrant Operations Center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

3. I began my federal career in 1996 with legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) as a Detention Enforcement Officer in Miami, Florida. I was promoted to a Deportation Officer (DO) in 2002, and after the formation of DHS and ICE in March 2003, I rose through the ranks of ERO with promotions to Supervisory Detention and Deportation Officer (SDDO), Assistant FOD (AFOD), Deputy FOD (DFOD), and FOD of ERO Miami. In 2022, I became a member of the Senior Executive Service as FOD for ERO Miami. In January 2025, I held the position of Acting Assistant Director for ICE Field Operations. From February 2025 through May 2025, I served as the Acting Deputy Executive Associate Director for ICE ERO. Responsible for a budget of approximately \$5.1 billion dollars, I directed the operations of more than 7,800 employees assigned to 25 ERO field offices and headquarters, in over 180 domestic locations and 30 overseas locations. In June 2025, I resumed my role as FOD for ERO Miami.

4. I am familiar with the allegations made by Plaintiffs in the instant lawsuit regarding the South Florida Soft-Sided Facility South (SFSSFS) Detention Center. Additionally, I am familiar with immigration enforcement activities and programs nationwide, including detention facility capacities and their operational impacts.

5. I provide this declaration based on my personal knowledge, reasonable inquiry, and information obtained from various records and other DHS and ICE employees in the regular course of business.

Operational Impact of the Closure of the SFSSFS Detention Center

6. Although only one of ERO's 25 AORs, ERO Miami consistently accounts for 10-15 percent of all ICE arrests nationwide.

7. ERO Miami oversees one of the largest non-detained ICE dockets in the nation, managing approximately 1.5 million active cases involving aliens in various stages of the immigration process.

8. ICE ERO, specifically ERO Miami also maintains a network of detention beds throughout its AOR, through a mixture of ICE-owned, privately owned, and state and local facilities.

9. Since January 2025, all detention facilities under ERO Miami have been operating at or above their maximum capacity.

10. ERO Miami strives to maintain sufficient bedspace to support its law enforcement operations, including the arrests of aliens with criminal histories (criminal aliens) from prisons and jails, as well as aliens at-large who pose threats to national security and public safety within the United States. Additionally, ERO Miami accommodates fluctuating referrals from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. What sets ERO Miami apart from other ERO field offices is its dual responsibility of managing interior arrests while also addressing the unpredictable nature of maritime ventures, which can result in hundreds of arrests at a time.

11. The expanded detention capacity Florida created with SFSSFS Detention Center is essential for ERO Miami's operations, as it permits ERO Miami to keep pace with increased and often unpredictable detention needs. Its removal would compromise the government's ability to enforce immigration laws, safeguard public safety, protect national security, and maintain border security.

12. Without access to the 2,000 detention beds at the SFSSFS Detention Center, ERO Miami

would lose the ability to detain criminal aliens (to include aliens with violent criminal records), as all of the aforementioned ERO Miami facilities are at or above capacity. The SFSSFS Detention Center is a critical component necessary to prevent operational failure and potentially avert a national crisis.

13. A disruption in the use or suspension of the SFSSFS Detention Center would also severely impact coordination with State, County, and Federal partners, who hold Title 8 (immigration enforcement) authority and maintain daily immigration arrest rates comparable to ERO Miami. Without sufficient bedspace, these partners would ostensibly lose the ability to carry out arrests, significantly affecting the various task forces focusing on apprehending criminal aliens, gang members, wanted fugitive felons, and individuals with prior criminal removals. This would pose a substantial risk to community safety.

14. The United States, including ERO Miami, is legally required to detain certain aliens. Eliminating the use of the SFSSFS Detention Center would result in delays or the inability to pursue arrests of criminal aliens solely due to insufficient bedspace. This would severely undermine the consistent enforcement of immigration laws.

15. The SFSSFS Detention Center is thus a vital tool for maintaining a lawful immigration process and detention environment. Before its establishment, ERO Miami faced significant overcrowding in its detention facilities, which placed the government in a challenging position to ensure compliance with ICE detention standards. The SFSSFS Detention Center has effectively alleviated these issues.

16. The cornerstone of ICE's enforcement mission is the promotion of public safety through the removal of criminal aliens from the United States. The ability to detain criminal aliens ensures ICE's ability to eventually effectuate their removal from our communities. Continued strain on detention capacity greatly increases the possibility that criminal aliens, a priority target

for immigration enforcement, will remain at large and able to continue committing crimes. Aliens detained at the SFSSFS Detention Center included those with serious crimes to include robbery with a deadly weapon, sexual battery, and lewd and lascivious molestation of a child.

17. The SFSSFS Detention Center has been instrumental in supporting the government's robust immigration enforcement efforts by enabling the detention of criminal aliens. Without this facility and its detention capacity, many of these individuals would either be released back into the community or not arrested at all, placing significant strain on local communities. The inability to detain criminal aliens due solely to a lack of detention space creates a serious public safety risk. Notably, it is estimated that among the millions of aliens who entered the United States under the previous administration, one in four provided a release address in the State of Florida.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed this 23rd day of August, 2025

**GARRETT
J RIPA**

Digitally signed by GARRETT J RIPA
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Government, ou=People,
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c=US
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Garrett Ripa
Field Office Director
Enforcement and Removal Operations
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
U.S. Department of Homeland Security